HOMO EXTENDED (Daniel Pinheiro, 2017)

We're all cyborgs… taking on Haraway's perspective on her pivotal essay "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s" and thinking about the constant propagation / regeneration of ourselves through the mediation of the self, the individual is already a cyborg from the moment it extends itself into the image of itself towards a pursuit for self-recognition. As human beings we have an immersive experience of the self through the relation not only with each other and with objects but also in relation to a constantly changing reflection that is nothing more than a construct of what we think we are. In this perspective the cyborg exists through its own (im)material construct. We become cyborgs the moment we spread across different mediums our own sense of being.

THE MEDIUM IS (NOT) THE MESSAGE | THE MESSAGE IS (NOW) THE MEDIUM

(Not). Taking on Marshall McLuhan's thoughts on how *the medium is the message* – by a series of processes that make the content within the medium part of the medium itself, this 'NOT' makes me think about how much we have given to become extended beings. Through technology we've reached a point in time where we spread across multiple channels of communication and if one of the purposes of connectedness was initially an oasis of greater knowledge and completeness it has turned into a massive and intricate network where information flows at a vertiginous speed – almost invisible, almost unperceivable, and almost ethereal. This information, this content, this speech, this text, this typing[].

This text will stop here. The one above.

Because it's not an assumption about the world, it's not a message on how the world is right now or how it was or how it will be in a future – if there will be one. Extinction of humans facing AI – AI is nothing more than data, taught and raised by us / we've tried to understand the world as it surrounds us, and we still do even if we're surrounded – in front of us – by a plain landscape made of videos, images, words, information, channeled information tailored for a specific set of tastes, likes, clicks, intentions, views.... An AI capable of understanding the world it lives in will (never) understand itself.

It comes as virus,
It comes as a possibility of ending problems,
It comes with the promise of making the world a better place,
It comes with more knowledge,
It comes from deep learning,
It comes from a lack of time,
It comes from automation,
It comes from mechanization,
It comes from repeating,
It comes from saying what we need,
Want,
Search,
Look,
It comes to erase our sense of being,
It comes to erase our presence,
It comes to live closely with us,
It comes to being part of our senses,
It comes to replace our muscles,
It comes to replace our thoughts,
It comes from our memories,
It comes from wanting more,
It comes from not being able to be higher,
It comes from the center,
It comes from a replication,
It comes from a replication,
It is a replication,
It is the possibility of replicating us,
It is the possibility of the ever after,
It is the possibility of fighting loneliness,
It is the possibility of doing nothing,
It is unemployment,
It is incapacity,
It is numbness,
It is a failure,

It is a failure the constant effort to understand humanity and our human factor implied in our agency, it is in fact part of an evolution but nevertheless it's nothing more than electricity running. Turn it off and we'll be left alone with the sound of the machines turning down, the fans still spinning, the sparks having their last breath.

As the medium conveys the message it is supposed in one of many perspectives that it becomes part of it, it is a whole that is needed to have better understanding of what is being coded; presently the medium is the whole. As part of the coded structure there might be nothing that will be outside of it to interpret it. We became part of that coded structure. What's being left out of it – even if we are as well, probably – has for us no capacity of understanding whatever it is we're trying to _____.
Part of a coded structure and thus part of the medium, the message doesn't exist because it will reach nowhere. The medium is therefore, in this case, devoid of meaning and it conveys ultimately its codification, which might be decoded into parts of a similar system which defines our own existence. The coded structure has grown into a "living" matter, continuously transforming within itself and giving space to interstialitites that enclose void areas where new forms might arise. New forms, new models, new structures, a newer version of individualities / the plurality of these immeasurable limitations could somewhat be a multiverse in which we've always lived ever since it became clear that our own nature is limited.
The "machine" is fueled by human intentions. We're inside the machine. We're turned to the inside of what we have built and not capable of having a body anymore. A fallacious sense of agency is in fact an inertia that has imprisoned the 'being' inside its own creation.

The digital reality turned more real than reality in itself (SERRES, 2001).

In this reality we're mere representations of ourselves. The device that allows us to see that is the medium itself, the form, the content is replicated and meaningless.
A process of years replicating our own systems of organization and we face a mirror that reflects its own perspective. A mirror reflecting a mirror. Tunnel Vision. Like if we go inside one of those clothing stores and take a pair of jeans to try inside a full mirrored booth we get lost in the infinity of the space, a multiplication of a single unity that spreads across infinity. Imagine that same booth with no one there. Imagine that same booth with the lights on and you see a multiplied space; Imagine that same booth with the lights off and a dark infinite space. If we take this example and we think how much technology is a redundancy in the communication of itself - we can easily understand that by living inside our creations, we're unconsciously planning our own obsolescence. So if once the medium was (also) the message, and if we try to understand that the fabric of the medium – despite translated into code and data – is social, human, individual (from each one of us), and that that fabric no longer serves its function (by being obsolete) then the medium is malfunctioning – not capable of delivering any sort of message – we no longer understand what we want from it, and it no longer has perceivable content.

Networked space is itself a medium, or whatever one might call a medium's promiscuous, posthumous state today. It is a form of life (and death) that contains, sublates, and archives all previous forms of media. In this fluid media space, images and sounds morph across different bodies and carriers, acquiring more and more glitches and bruises along the way.
– Hito Steyerl "Too Much World: Is The Internet Dead?"

Gradually becoming part of the medium we've entered the system, the networked (staged) device of synaptic correlations, in which we're nodes transmitting fractured parts of a complex message that we are yet to understand it's complete meaning; like an automated machine we're feeding this system with errors and uncertainties – backspacing what we consider to be wrong and replacing it with more accurate (positive) codes, continuously perpetuating a doubtful humanity bound to its own, natural, degradation.
In an age of technological reproducibility and permanent state of liveness, the medium is a disaggregation of several feeds that, together, represent the continuous flow of data information constantly travelling between nodes and servers constituting a shared (seemingly) horizontal space. The promise of an interconnected global system gradually translated into a fragmented and disconnected culture where the dissipation of time through technology (and physical space itself) led to an incorporeal sense of being part of a totality. The internet could be seen, here, as the sum of all the pre-existing mediums, each one corresponding – through evolution – to a smaller capacity of reaching out to people. From the mouth-to-

mouth that would gather large groups of people in public spaces, to electronic mediums such as television that would leave limited groups of people gathering inside the comfort of their houses until the portable contemporary devices that will lure us with the sense that we are in fact sharing the same information between each other, when in fact we're not. The multi-broadcasting society that we are a part of is an ongoing participatory communicating system, a space, a fully furnished environment suitable to the needs of our own extensions.

To understand one's relationship towards the world, how that relationship and identity is a construct across time and space is to grasp our metadata within the system. Like any other system we rapidly become outdated, data will corrupt itself, malfunction and misunderstandings of the original version will give place to new mediums that will then be able to interpret the message that we are presently wanting to send to our future selves.
It serves its function both as a tool and as an independent agent and it is an immersive environment populated with digital artifacts, resultant from mass production. It's hybrid and mutable nature reflects our own adaptability and conveys the duality of human-machine interaction, it materializes the matter that is made of and outputs it into different forms, auto replicating in infinite iterations. A singular multiple consciousness mediating itself in circles.

By digitally witnessing the peripheral representation of the self we disappear, like an echo we might not even be here anymore when we decide that it is time to look at the world from the outside again; The golden record no longer holds specific data of what is important to show of the world to aliens, it is the world as we have it in our hands right now, it is everything and its self-degradation included.

The medium is a collectively made emulation of a global operational system, an alternate entity globally distributed, fueled by electricity. A new social order. Or disorder. Disorderly manufacturing deep dream.

Daniel Pinheiro, November 2017

Author's note: This is a draft for future thoughts on the theme and thus it's an exercise of writing towards thinking the present days we live and the impact of technology on our lives and our place within a tech driven, networked society.

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This text was presented in the context of the exhibition *The Medium is Not the Message* (Maus Hábitos, Porto, Portugal); The exhibition took place between November 18th and December 10th, 2017. Below more information on the exhibition.

Curated by José Alberto Gomes and André Covas

In these times, technology and process conquer a greater predominance and dazzling in artistic space, both in creation and final presentations, thus the challenge is to think about the provocative premise The Medium is the Message.

From the overly literal and distorted interpretation of Marshall McLuhan's famous dissertation, that has become increasingly true, we are invited to think about rearranging space-content vs medium in the context of artistic creation with technological resources.

Taking an exhibition as a material challenge, Nuno Pimenta is invited to interpret this premise using the exhibition room as a whole installation device. On another level, three different entities connected differently to artistic processes are invited to write about this installation creating an expanded field of reflection to non-material formats.

"Media, by altering the environment, evoke in us unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension of any one sense alters the way we think and act - the way we perceive the world.
When these ratios change, men change." - Marshall McLuhan